This report is organized around the three major goals in AASL’s current strategic plan - Education Policy, Leadership Activation, and Research. The report highlights and summarizes AASL’s activities over the last year.

Education Policy

Right to Read Act
AASL worked diligently and collaboratively with ALA Public Policy and Advocacy staff as well as the staff of Senator Reed’s and Representative’s Grijalva’s office to introduce the Right to Read Act in October of 2022 and then to reintroduce the Right to Read Act 2023 during National Library Week in April 2023. The bills have been endorsed by ALA, AASL as well as the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and PEN America. As a member of NEA, Kathy Lester met several times with staff at NEA to help ensure their endorsement.

AASL President Kathy Lester wrote Knowledge Quest Blog posts to inform AASL members (and others) about the original bill (Right to Read Act: Join AASL in Thanking Sponsors) and its reintroduction (Every Day is Right to Read Day). President Lester also spoke on Education Talk Radio in early November 2022 (School Libraries and the Right to Read) about the importance of access to inclusive and diverse resources for all students. During this interview, she spoke about the Unite Against Book Bans report “Empowered by Reading” and the Right to Read Act.

More than 3500 advocates took action in the 2022 ALA initiative to thank the Right to Read sponsors and more than 6400 advocates have taken action thus far in the current 2023 initiative (bit.ly/right2read23) to ask legislators to co-sponsor the 2023 Right to Read Act.

AASL would like to thank the ALA Executive Board for their support on the Right to Read Act and specifically thank them for their support of the need for equitable access for all of our nation’s learners to school libraries staffed by state-certified school librarians.

Working Collaboratively to Address Challenges
At the AASL President’s Program at ALA Annual, AASL President Kathy Lester will moderate a panel discussion about speaking out for the Freedom to Read and why it is important for all students to have access to a wide variety of books and information. Panelists include:

- Kelly Yang, author of Front Desk and Finally Seen,
- Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul, educator, author, and adapter of Stamped for Kids,
- Amanda Jones, winner of AASL’s Intellectual Freedom Award, and
- Becky Calzada, co-founder of the #Freadom group.

ALA President Lessa Pelayo-Lazado and AASL President Kathy Lester cohosted the April ALA Connect Live Session - Our Brave Communities: Supporting School Librarians to explore how everyone in the ecosystem can support issues facing school libraries including equity of access to state-certified school librarians and the current unprecedented number of book challenges. Panelists for the session included:

- Keith Curry Lance, principal investigator for the IMLS-funded national study, The School Librarian Investigation—Decline or Evolution
- Liz Phipps Soeiro, Director of Library Services for Boston Public Schools
- Raegan Miller, Director of Development and Finance for the Florida Freedom to Read Project
- Cameron Samuels, student advocate and former student in Katy Independent School District in Texas

The session was very inspiring and received positive feedback. The recording is available here.

The ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom and AASL worked collaboratively to host two webinars for school librarians to support their work defending intellectual freedom in school libraries. The two sessions included:

- March 22, 2023: Managing Challenges with Our School Policies and the Law

The recordings of these sessions are available free to AASL Members here.

AASL President Kathy Lester wrote a Knowledge Quest Blog post Supporting Each Other: Book Challenges and hosted a Town Hall in October 2022 along with AASL Board members to provide support for school librarians currently undergoing challenges within their schools. The AASL Chapter Assembly which met virtually on November 9, 2022, February 15, 2023, and April 19, 2023 also provided time for Chapter Delegates to share and support each other.

In addition, the AASL/ALSC/YALSA Joint Committee has been working on providing resources that will support all youth librarians with challenges. The committee has written four Knowledge Quest Blog posts to share information with youth librarians. The four posts are:

- Soft Censorship Scenarios - What Would You Do
- Self Reflection on Soft Censorship
- A Few Coping Strategies for Challenging Times
- Sharing Selection & Reconsideration Policies to Support Reading Choices

AASL Partnerships
AASL maintains partnerships with several organizations that align with our core values of learning; innovation; equity, diversity, inclusion; intellectual freedom; and collaboration. Four of these partnerships are:
Human Rights Campaign: Project Thrive - AASL has been a partner with Project Thrive since August 2020 in order to collaborate to support LGBTQ youth in our learning communities. This year, AASL President Kathy Lester was a panelist at a September 2022 webinar “The Power of Representation in Books” and AASL member Jamie Gregory presented at the February 2023 Time to Thrive Regional Summit in Atlanta, Georgia highlighting the AASL toolkit “Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Materials in School Libraries.” AASL was a partner in the HRC Welcoming Schools National Day of Reading: A Celebration of Stories Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Youth on February 16, 2023. AASL Staff and AASL President Kathy Lester will participate in “Project THRIVE National Partner convening” on Friday, June 2nd.

ADL Education - ADL Education presented at the September 2022 AASL Town Hall and April 2023 Chapter Assembly about their “No Place for Hate” program. ADL also sponsors programs of interest to school librarians such as Books Matter and Read Aloud and Conversation. ADL Education will exhibit/present at the 2023 AASL National Conference.

Getting Better Foundation - Getting Better Foundation is the producer of the award winning documentary “Trust Me” which explores how media technology is influencing society and highlights the need for media literacy education. This year AASL created a Task Force to align the Trust Me Classroom Guide to AASL Standards. In addition, AASL and Getting Better Foundation hosted a special School Library Month viewing of the documentary and AASL President Kathy Lester moderated a School Library Month panel: “Empowering Next Gens with Media Literacy” with Dr. Belinha De Abreu, President of the International Council for Media Literacy and founder of the International Media Literacy Research Symposium, and Rosemary Smith, Managing Director of the Getting Better Foundation.

National Media Literacy Alliance - AASL is a member of the National Media Literacy Alliance which is a group of organizations working together to advance media literacy education. AASL Executive Director Sylvia Knight Norton attends meetings with the alliance to coordinate efforts.

Support for State and Local School Librarians
AASL has received several requests for letters of support for legislation or to maintain school library staffing. AASL has coordinated with Public Policy and Advocacy, State Advocacy staff to provide letters and ALA President Lessa Pelayo-Lesado is committed to the importance of school librarians and has co-signed each letter with AASL President Kathy Lester. Letters were written for legislation: DC Public Schools, California School Library Lead (AB535), Washington State Bill SB5102 and for support to maintain school library staffing: North Allegheny, Pennsylvania School District; Tolland Public Schools, Connecticut; Evergreen Public Schools, Washington; and Wallingford Public Schools, Connecticut.

Exhibiting at National Education Conferences
AASL exhibited at two national education conferences this year. Thanks to the generous support of Marina "Marney" Welmers, AASL exhibited at the National Association Elementary School Principal (NAESP) Conference in July 2022 (AASL at NAESP Conference) and the Association for Middle Level Educators (AMLE) Conference in November 2022. AASL was able to continue to educate stakeholders about AASL and the vital work of school librarians.

Partner with Project Look Sharp (Ithaca College) on IMLS Grant
AASL has partnered with Project Look Sharp at Ithaca College for an IMLS Grant. The grant proposal is to develop a nationwide plan to support school librarians in the leadership role in media literacy in their schools. Project Look Sharp has been working with school librarians in New York State and want to expand and adapt their work across the nation with AASL’s partnership.

Response to Federal Request for Information: Digital Literacy/Digital Resilience
AASL wrote a detailed response to the Federal Request for Information for successful approaches to improve digital literacy and digital resilience. AASL highlighted school librarians’ essential leadership of digital literacy in their schools and provided several examples in their response.

AASL President Interviews/Events
AASL President Kathy Lester appeared on the Edutalk Radio program on 9/29/2022 along with Dr. Molly Ness, Board member of the International Literacy Association (ILA) to speak about the role of school librarians in leading literacy in their schools and the International Literacy Association’s Literacy Leadership Brief “The Essential Leadership of School Librarians.”

AASL President Kathy Lester presented about School Library Advocacy and participated in a panel along with ALA President Lessa Pelayo-Lassado and ALA Executive Board Member Kathy Carroll as part of the San Jose State University (SJSU) School Library Summit in September 2022.

AASL President Kathy Lester responded to several media requests for interviews about reading, access to diverse literature, and challenges and censorship. The list of interviews can be found here.

Leadership Activation
AASL National Conference - October 19-21, Tampa, Florida
The AASL Conference Committee and the AASL Staff are busy planning the 2023 AASL National Conference scheduled for October 19-21 in Tampa, Florida. As the only national conference dedicated to school librarians, the professional development provided for attendees is unmatched. The AASL Board has written a letter “Learning Together, Standing Together” about the decision to keep the conference in Florida and to stand with our school library colleagues in Florida who are fighting for their students’ Right to Read. AASL is looking forward to a successful conference. Registration is outpacing registration from the 2019 AASL Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

AASL Leadership Trips to State Chapter Conferences
AASL Leaders travel to State Chapter Conference on approximately a six-year cycle. State Chapters are an important segment of AASL and leadership visits allow AASL to connect with state leaders and stay in touch with initiatives and issues at the state level. This year AASL President Kathy Lester traveled to Wyoming, Idaho, Arizona, and Florida. She was also invited to the New York Section of School Librarians Conference. AASL Past-President Jennisen Lucas traveled to Ohio and Maryland. AASL President-Elect traveled to Indiana. AASL Executive Director Sylvia Knight Norton traveled to Michigan. AASL Leaders present “There is Only One AASL” at these conferences as well as presenting or presiding at other sessions based on the needs of the chapter.

AASL Annual Virtual Membership Meeting
AASL held its Annual Virtual Membership Meeting on May 10, 2023 in a Town Hall format. AASL President Kathy Lester presented [bit.ly/AASLmeet23] highlights from the year, thanked current AASL Board Members and Section Leaders and congratulated newly elected Board Members and Section Leaders including Becky Calzada who was elected AASL President 2024-2025. President Lester also thanked the AASL Chapter Coordinating Team and Committee Chairpersons for their work this year.

**AASL Town Halls**

AASL Town Halls are an opportunity for school library professionals to network and brainstorm around a central theme. During this year’s Town Halls, AASL President invited panelists to share ideas and moderated the discussion during the Town Hall. Panelist and attendees were able to share successes, solicit ideas, and strategize the best ways to meet the needs of school librarians and their learners. Below is a list of this year’s Town Halls and [this](#) document includes a more detailed description and links to the recordings of each Town Hall.

- August 2022: Back to School with Award Winning Collaboration  
  *Panelists: Michael Giller, Sarah Sansbury*
- September 2022: School Libraries as No Place for Hate  
  *AASL Partner: ADL Education*
- October 2022: Support for School Librarians During Challenging Times  
  *AASL Board Members*
- November 2022: Transforming Gratitude and Narrative into Advocacy  
  *Becca Munson, Amanda Kordeliski*
- January 2023: New Year Reflections and Goals  
  *Sylvia Knight Norton, Tamara Cox, Lisa Fisher Janosz*
- February 2023: Love Your Profession  
  *Courtney Pentland, Jen Gilbert, Blake Hopper, Jamie Gregory, Molly Dettman*
- March 2023: Celebrating School Library Month  
  *Carolyn Vibbert, Heather Horner, Natasha Carty, Fallon Farokhi*
- April 2023: Supporting Equity, Choice, and Student Voice in the Library  
  *Julie Stivers, Maura Madigan, Samantha Archibald Mora*
- May 2023: AASL Annual Membership Meeting  
  *AASL President, Kathy Lester*
- June 2023: Share and Connect: State Level Advocacy  
  *Barbara Johnson (CT), Eryn Duffee (WA), Tricina Strong-Beebe (NJ)*

**AASL President Virtual Presentation to Guam School Librarians**

AASL President Kathy Lester presented virtually to Guam School Librarians in February. Guam School Librarians were interested in learning more about application of the AASL National Standards.

**AASL Publications**

AASL continues to sell the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries (2018)* in collaboration with ALA Editions with $39K in sales September through February this year. AASL has placed out a [call for volunteers](#) to be part of a committee to review,
evaluate and update the National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries and supporting content and material.

AASL has also published many titles related to the standards. Three new publications were released this year Social and Emotional Learning for Picture Book Readers by Maureen Schlosser, Engage by Katherine Roots Lewis and Marcia Mardis, and Embracing Culturally Responsive Practice in School Libraries by Elisabet Kennedy. Three more books are in production to be in the bookstore at the AASL National Conference.

AASL also published five issues of its journal Knowledge Quest. The Knowledge Quest Editorial Board selected the themes and article authors for the issues Vol 51, No. 1 “The Intentionality of School Librarians”; No. 2 “Civic Engagement”; No. 3 “Legacy & Vision: How Does Our Past Inform Our Future?”; No. 4 “School Library-Led Community Engagement” and No. 5 “Everyday Bravery.” The publication of this journal is especially important since other journals such as Teacher Librarian and School Library Connection have ceased publication.

AASL KQ Blog features a slate of 30 bloggers including the AASL President - practicing school librarians who address professional issues such as collaboration, intellectual freedom advocacy, emerging trends, and more. AASL President Kathy Lester wrote more than 14 blog posts this year.

These publications provide information to AASL members to enhance their knowledge and leadership. In addition, AASL activates leadership by providing opportunities for AASL members to be authors of the AASL books, articles of Knowledge Quest, and KQ Blog Posts.

AASL Committees
AASL had 24 committees this year with 11 of these committees being Award and Grant committees. A few highlights of Committee Work include:

- The School Library Event Promotion Committee expanded their work beyond promotion of School Library Month to include events each month that can be celebrated each month in school libraries. For instance January 23 through 29 was Crayola Creativity Week. The Event Promotion Committee sponsored a webinar during this week titled: “We Don't Shush Here: Student Voice in the Library”.
- The Membership Engagement Committee worked to engage members through the AASL Communities of Practice. There are five Communities of Practice: Digital and Technology Tools; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Information Literacy Instruction; Literature/Reading Promotion. An example of an activity was the Information Literacy Instruction Community of Practice sponsored a webinar entitled “Civic Online Reasoning: Sorting Fact from Fiction on the Internet” with the Stanford History Education Group.

AASL Award and Grant Committees decided on the following awards and grants:

- **AASL National School Library of the Year**
  - **Awarded to:** West Maple Elementary School, Birmingham Public Schools, Michigan
  - **Sponsored by Follett**, the award recognizes school libraries as a unique and essential part of their learning community. NSLY honors school libraries exemplifying implementation of AASL’s National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries. The recipient receives $10,000.
- **AASL ABC-CLIO Leadership Grant**
Awarded to: South Carolina Association of School Librarians
*Sponsored by ABC-CLIO*, the up to $1,750 grant is awarded to school library associations that are AASL affiliates for planning and implementing leadership programs at the state, regional, or local levels.

- **AASL Chapter of the Year Award**
  **Awarded to:** Missouri Association of School Librarians
  The AASL Chapter of the Year Award recognizes the AASL Chapter most active and dynamic in achieving the goals of AASL at the state and local level. The Chapter receives a $1000 stipend.

- **AASL Intellectual Freedom Award**
  **Awarded to:** Amanada Jones
  *Sponsored by Proquest*, the Intellectual Freedom Award is given for upholding the principles of intellectual freedom as set forth by the American Association of School Librarians and the American Library Association. The award includes $2,000 to the recipient and $1,000 to the school library of the recipient’s choice.

- **AASL Innovative Reading Grant**
  **Awarded to:** Charlotte Chung
  *Sponsored by Capstone*, the $2500 grant supports the planning and implementation of a unique and innovative program for K-9th learners which motivates and encourages reading, especially with struggling readers.

- **AASL Frances Henne Award**
  **Awarded to:** Molly Dettman
  *Sponsored by Librarians Unlimited*, the $1250 award recognizes a school librarian with five years or less experience who demonstrates leadership qualities with learners, educators, and administrators. The award provides a stipend for the recipient's first-time attendance at an AASL National Conference.

- **AASL Roald Dahl's Miss Honey Social Justice Award**
  **Awarded to:** “Global Human Rights Research Project” from Prospect Sierra School in El Cerrito, California
  *Sponsored by Penguin Random House*, Roald Dahl’s Miss Honey Social Justice Award recognizes and encourages collaboration and partnerships between school librarians and teachers in teaching social justice through joint planning of a program, unit or event in support of social justice using school library resources. The award consists of $2,000 to the librarian, up to $1,000 travel and housing reimbursement to attend the AASL Awards Ceremony, and a $5,000 book donation by Penguin Random House.

- **AASL Inspire Special Event (STEM) Grants**
  **Awarded to:** Carrie Friday, Melbourne High School, Florida; Tatanisha Love, Southwest Academy, Maryland; Deborah Hoover, Northeast Middle School, Pennsylvania; Joanna Sargent, Lady's Island Middle School, South Carolina; Stephanie Charlefour, Westmoreland School, New Hampshire; Mitzi Mack, Young Middle Magnet, Florida; Rebecca Cauftman, Radford High School, Virginia; Diane Mokuau, Molokai High School, Hawaii; Sarah Appel, Moriarty High School, New Mexico; Mary Randall, Manchester Jr/Sr High School, Indiana; Nathan Sekinger, Gayle Middle School, Virginia.
  *Sponsored by Danaher Foundation*, The STEM Special Event Grant program supports a special event to increase student engagement. The goal is to provide direct assistance funding to middle or high school libraries for special short-term projects or events that...
would engage students to promote STEM education and promote student interest in a career in the STEM field. Each grant is capped at $3000.

- **AASL Toor Scholarships** -
  **Awarded to:** Karen Bentall, Oakridge Elementary School, Arlington, Virginia; Harry Brake, Woodbridge High School, Greenwood, Delaware; Molly Dettman, Norman North High School, Norman, Oklahoma; Sheila Michaels, Nixa Public Schools, Nixa, Missouri; Martha Pangburn, Norman Public Schools, Norman, Oklahoma; Danielle Schwessinger, Elmer Wolfe Elementary, Union Bridge, Maryland; Laura Silver, PS 90: The Magnet School for Environmental Studies and Community Wellness, Brooklyn, New York; Kristin Thrower, Meadowbrook High School, North Chesterfield, Virginia. Established by the Toor Family, in honor of their parents, Jay and Ruth Toor, the Toor Scholarships for Strong Public-School Libraries are for public school librarians who have created and implemented a local public awareness/marketing campaign that promotes and positions their school library as a necessary resource in the community. Each scholarship recipient receives a $1,000 scholarship to cover travel to attend the biennial AASL National Conference. Recipients will participate in a concurrent session panel to present their local public awareness/marketing campaign. Additional promotion of campaigns will include opportunities to publish articles and host webinars on AASL’s various platforms.

- **AASL Best Digital Tools** -
  **Recognized Digital Tools include:** Brown University’s Choices Programs, Discovery Education’s K-12 learning platform, MackinVIA, National Geographic Society Educator Resources, Adobe Express, Rumor Guard, ChessKid, and WORD Force Reading Adventures
  AASL’s Best Digital Tools are recognized for fostering qualities of: innovation/creativity, active participation, collaboration, user-friendly, encourages exploration, and information/reference.

Awards still to be announced include the AASL Distinguished School Administrator Award and the AASL Travel Grants sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound for thirty first time National Conference attendees.

All of these 2023 AASL award and grant winners along with AASL award winners from 2022 will be recognized at the AASL National Conference in October 2023 in Tampa.

**AASL School Leader Collaborative**
The AASL School Leader Collaborative works to influence local, state, and national policy to ensure that school libraries are well-funded and fully staffed with full-time, certified school librarians and dedicated support personnel. Within this initiative, superintendents and principals selected from nominations by their school librarians, collaborate to influence funding entities to empower school libraries and school librarians as leaders in transformative teaching and learning. AASL released several new videos this year based on interviews with the previous cohort of leaders. These videos can be used by School Librarians for advocacy, for presentations, etc. This year’s School Leader Collaborative cohort has been meeting regularly and will be presenting and holding a workshop for administrators and school librarians at the AASL National Conference.

**AASL Emerging Leader Project**
2023 AASL Emerging Leaders Brandi Veal and Cybele Garcia Kohel will work on the project Developing Inquisitive Learners, Critical Thinkers, and Resourceful Citizens. The Emerging Leaders team under the leadership of AASL member Courtney Lewis will develop materials to support professional development and instruction around the National School Library Standards Shared Foundation of Inquire. The activity guide, applied framework, and infographic Developing Critical Curators Seeking Diverse Perspectives from last year’s AASL Emerging Leader project on the National School Library Standards Shared Foundation of Curate was published.

AASL Commendations
Each year, the AASL Chapter Delegates bring forth resolutions to commend a program, event, or product. These resolutions are voted on by the AASL Chapter Assembly and then brought forward to the AASL Board for final approval. There were 11 commendations approved at the AASL Chapter Assembly at ALA Annual 2022. These commendations include:

- All Ready Access Program/Schlow to School, resolution submitted by Pennsylvania School Library Association (PSLA)
- The Conscious Connect, Inc., resolution submitted by the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA)
- Palmetto State Teachers Association Hill Day Program, resolution submitted by the South Carolina Association of School Librarians (SCASL)
- Rainbow Library, resolution submitted by the Missouri Association of School Librarians (MASL)
- Nebraska Library Association and the Nebraska Library Commission, resolution submitted by the Nebraska School Librarians Association (NSLA)
- North Hunterdon-Voorhees Intellectual Freedom Fighters, resolution submitted by the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL)
- All CT Reads, resolution submitted by the Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL)
- Bookmarks Kids & Schools Program, resolution submitted by the North Carolina School Library Media Association (NCSLMA)
- Promising Pages, resolution submitted by the North Carolina School Library Media Association (NCSLMA)
- Colorado State Library Promotion of Grants, resolution submitted by the Colorado Association of School Libraries (CASL)
- Tennessee Youth Coalition, resolution submitted by the Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TASL)

Research

SLR
School Library Research (SLR) is the scholarly refereed research journal of the American Association of School Librarians. There have been two research articles published this year.

- Research examining school librarian out-of-pocket spending during COVID-19, Jenna Kammer, Charlene Atkins, and Rene Burress
- Research examining school librarians’ involvement in online teaching and learning practices during COVID-19 pandemic, Donna Wake, Helen Hu, and Erin Shaw

Research to Practice Column in Knowledge Quest Journal
Three Research to Practice Columns were published in the AASL Knowledge Quest Journal this year.

- **Selection Policies Across the United States**, April M. Dawkins
- **School Librarians Creating Space for Connection and Collaboration**, Donna Waker, Helen Hu, and Erin Shaw

**ESLS Looking at Recruiting**
The AASL Practice Committee brought forth a concern to the AASL Board about the shortage of school librarians and the need to recruit to the profession. Based on this concern, the Educator Section of School Librarians (ESLS) leaders agreed to take on the task of collecting data about recruitment and providing possible recommendations on steps to take toward recruitment.

**Research Awards**
Three research papers were awarded the 2023 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Research Grants by the Educators of School Librarians Section (ESLS) of AASL. Sponsored by ABC-CLIO, the grants recognize excellence in manuscripts addressing a persistent and recurring challenge in the field of school librarianship. Each grant consists of a $350 award and the researchers will present their papers at the 2023 AASL National Conference in Tampa, Florida. The awardees include:

- Joyce Kasman Valenza, Associate Teaching Professor, Rutgers University, Heather Dalal, Gihan Mohamad, Brenda Boyer, Cara Berg, Leslin H. Charles, Rebecca Bushby, Megan Dempsey, Joan Dalrymple, and Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott, “First years' information literacy backpacks: What's already packed or not packed?”
- Mary H. Moen, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the School Library Media Program, University of Rhode Island, “1:1 Computing: A Case Study Examining How a Large District Leveraged School Librarians to Improve Teacher Practice, Learning Environments, and Digital Content.”

**Research Symposium at the AASL National Conference**
AASL is planning a Research Symposium at the AASL National Conference on October 19, 2023 in Tampa. The co-chairs of the Research Subcommittee of the AASL National Conference Committee, Rebecca Morris and Pamela Moore, are leading the planning of this Symposium.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Lester
AASL President, 2022-2023